

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE

ON THE

CLERGY RESERVES.

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To the Honourable the Commons House of Assembly, in Provincial Parliament as- sembled :

The Committee to whom was referred that part of His Excellency's opening Speech which related to the Clergy Reserves, beg leave to make the following

REPORT :

That deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, and anxious, if possible, to suggest some measure which might be acceptable to the community, keep in view the spirit of the object for which the Reserves were set apart, and avoid the excitement of any feelings on this most difficult topic—Your Committee determined to commence and prosecute their labors with calm and impartial feelings.

Their first object was to fix on some leading principles as the basis of the plan they might recommend to your Honorable House, the adoption of which would tend to reduce the question to one of mere detail, and the following subjects were carefully considered.

First—The propriety of carrying into full operation the system commenced under the authority of the Imperial Parliament, viz. selling all the Clergy Reserves.

Second—The Funds in which the proceeds of all sales should be invested.

Third—The purposes to which the sums so raised should be devoted, and whether the principal monies, or the annual interest only, should be appropriated.

Fourth—The mode by which such appropriation should be carried into effect.

Your Committee, on the first of these points, came to a determination to recommend to Your Honorable House that all the Clergy Reserves should be sold—among other arguments which weighed with your Committee in arriving at this conclusion, it may suffice to mention that there appeared no other certain mode of obtaining an immediate income to any considerable amount from these lands.

In considering the next question, your Committee, while they would advise the investment of the proceeds of all sales of the Reserves in Provincial Funds, feel it their duty strongly to press on your Honorable House that the interest should be so safely secured that hereafter no difficulty may be experienced in its collection. At the same time it was their desire that the proceeds should be loaned to the Province so as to be of immediate service for its internal improvement—and with a view of combining these two objects, your Committee have resolved to recommend to your Honorable House that the monies accruing from such sales shall be immediately invested in Provincial Debentures bearing an interest of six per cent per annum, and shall (if only the interest be appropriated) be expended in making and improving the public highways throughout the Province—the interest to be secured by Tolls on such roads—by a tax on the Districts wherein the money shall be laid out—and by any other mode which your Honorable House shall see fit to adopt.

The third and most important subject of deliberation with your Committee was, to what purposes the proceeds of these sales should be applied, and whether the appropriation should be confined to the interest, or extend also to the principal money.

Your Committee have felt themselves bound by every consideration of the future welfare of this Province to urge on your Honorable House that the proceeds of these Lands should be exclusively appropriated to Religious purposes; and they have selected three objects to which they think the expenditure may be properly made applicable :

First—The maintenance of Public Worship.

Second—The erection of Churches and Chapels.

Third—The Education of individuals for the office of the Ministry.

Considering also that these invaluable benefits should be secured not only to the present but to future generations, your Committee submit that only the annual interest should be thus expended.

Your Committee have not found it, in their judgment, advisable to offer any plan of distribution of the interest of the sales which would be complete in all its details, but have thought it more advisable to leave them unsettled to a certain extent so as to leave to the Executive Government a power to provide for any changes, from time to time, in the circumstances of different Religious bodies in the community. They have therefore resolved to recommend to your Honorable House that the Lieutenant Governor in Council should be empowered to appropriate such interest in the following manner :

First—Not more than one fourth to the Church of England.

Second—Not more than one fourth to the Church of Scotland.

Third,—The residue among such Bodies of Christians as he shall think fit, in order to promote to the uttermost the "diffusion of religion and true piety throughout the Province."

In order to carry out the recommendation of your Committee, independently of the general sanction of the Home Government, the direct assistance of the Imperial Parliament will be necessary to authorize the transfer of the proceeds of Clergy Reserves already sold, from the British funds into Provincial securities.

Your Committee have prepared a series of resolutions in accordance with this report, which they respectfully offer for the adoption of Your Honorable House.

Your Committee are well aware that no plan can be brought for the settlement of this interesting question to which objections will not be found and urged, or which can be made palatable to those who will not abate one jot of their own opinions, and still less to such as desire to prolong the contention to which this subject has unhappily given rise. Your Committee have on their part earnestly endeavored to suggest a scheme which will tend to allay any present irritation, and will form the basis of an ultimate and satisfactory solution of all the difficulties which have either arisen from, or been increased by, the long delay of legislation on the subject.

All which is respectfully submitted.

WM. H. DRAPER,
Chairman.

Committee Room, House of Assembly, }
18th March, 1839. }

1. *Resolved*, That the lands set apart from time to time, as reserves for the support and maintenance of a Protestant Clergy be sold in the same manner as other Crown lands in this Province.

2. *Resolved*, That the proceeds of past and future sales of any such lands be loaned to the Province at an interest of six per cent per annum to be invested in debentures which may be authorised by the Legislature for the making and improving the Queen's public high-ways throughout this Province ; the interest on such debentures to be secured by tolls on such high-ways, by a tax on the Districts within which the outlay shall take place, and by such other means as the Legislature may deem fitting and proper.

3. *Resolved*, That the annual interest arising from such debentures be appropriated and divided under the authority and direction of the Lieutenant Governor, in Council, in manner following.

Not more than one fourth to the Church of England.

Not more than one fourth to the Church of Scotland.

The residue to such other religious denominations as the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall see fit, to be by them expended for the following purposes—

The maintenance of Public Worship.

The erection of Churches or Chapels.

The education of persons for the ministry.

4. *Resolved*, That accounts of the expenditure of all sums granted, duly verified shall be, when required, rendered by the Churches or Bodies of Christians receiving the same and that the Lieutenant Governor be authorised to withhold further aid from any Church or Body of Christians until previous grants have been duly accounted for.

5. *Resolved*, That annual accounts of the Receipt and expenditure be laid before each Branch of the Legislature.

6. *Resolved*, That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty praying that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to recommend to the Imperial Parliament the passing such enactments as may be necessary for carrying the foregoing resolutions into full effect.